

## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A system, comprising:

a phone that comprises a connector component that is operationally connectable  
5 through a packet network to any selected one or more of a plurality of switch components;

wherein the any selected one or more of the plurality of switch components serve to  
provide one or more of originating and terminating telecommunication service to the phone.

2. The system of claim 1, wherein the connector component employs an explicit  
selection of a particular switch component of the plurality of switch components to  
10 operationally connect the phone through the packet network to the particular switch  
component, wherein a user of the phone inputs the explicit selection.

3. The system of claim 1, wherein the phone comprises a first phone;  
wherein the first phone comprises a shared call appearance with a second phone over a  
switch component of the plurality of switch components and through the packet network,  
15 wherein the second phone comprises the shared call appearance with the first phone over the  
switch component and through a network.

4. The system of claim 1, wherein the plurality of switch components comprises a first switch component and a second switch component;

wherein the phone comprises a connector component that is operationally connectable to the first switch component through the packet network and operationally connectable to the  
 5 second switch component through the packet network.

5. The system of claim 4, wherein the phone comprises a first phone;

wherein the first phone comprises a shared call appearance with a second phone over the first switch component and through the packet network, wherein the second phone comprises the shared call appearance with the first phone over the first switch component and  
 10 through a network; and

wherein the first phone comprises a second shared call appearance with a third phone over the second switch component and through the packet network, wherein the third phone comprises the second shared call appearance with the first phone over the second switch component and through a network.

15 6. The system of claim 1, wherein the phone comprises a connector component that is operationally connectable through the packet network to the any selected one or more of the plurality of switch components through a respective one or more of a plurality of voice over Internet protocol gateways.

7. The system of claim 1, wherein the phone is registrable with any selected one  
 20 of a plurality of voice over Internet protocol gateways.

8. The system of claim 7, wherein the plurality of voice over Internet protocol gateways comprises a first voice over Internet protocol gateway and a second voice over Internet protocol gateway;

wherein the phone is registrable with the first voice over Internet protocol gateway at a  
5 first time; and

wherein the phone is registrable with the second voice over Internet protocol gateway at a second time.

9. The system of claim 1, wherein the phone is registrable with any selected one of a plurality of voice over Internet protocol gateways that are owned and/or operated by a  
10 plurality of service providers.

10. The system of claim 9, wherein the plurality of service providers comprises a first service provider and a second service provider, wherein the plurality of voice over Internet protocol gateways comprises a first voice over Internet protocol gateway of the first service provider and a second voice over Internet protocol gateway of the second service  
15 provider;

wherein the phone is registrable with the first voice over Internet protocol gateway of the first service provider at a first time; and

wherein the phone is registrable with the second voice over Internet protocol gateway of the second service provider at a second time.

11. A method, comprising the steps of:

selecting a phone that comprises a connector component that is operationally connectable through a packet network to any selected one or more of a plurality of switch components;

5 wherein the any selected one or more of the plurality of switch components serve to provide one or more of originating and terminating telecommunication service to the phone.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein the step of selecting the phone that comprises the connector component that is operationally connectable through the packet network to the any selected one or more of the plurality of switch components comprises the steps of:

10 receiving from a user of the phone an explicit selection of a particular switch component of the plurality of switch components; and

employing the explicit selection with the connector component to operationally connect the phone through the packet network to the particular switch component.

13. The method of claim 11, wherein the step of selecting the phone that comprises the connector component that is operationally connectable through the packet network to the any selected one or more of the plurality of switch components comprises the steps of:

selecting the phone to comprise a first phone; and

selecting the first phone to comprise a shared call appearance with a second phone over a switch component of the plurality of switch components and through the packet network, wherein the second phone comprises the shared call appearance with the first phone over the switch component and through a network.

14. The method of claim 11, wherein the plurality of switch components comprises a first switch component and a second switch component, wherein the step of selecting the phone that comprises the connector component that is operationally connectable through the packet network to the any selected one or more of the plurality of switch components  
 5 comprises the step of:

selecting the phone to comprise a connector component that is operationally connectable to the first switch component through the packet network and operationally connectable to the second switch component through the packet network.

15. The method of claim 14, wherein the step of selecting the phone to comprise  
 10 the connector component that is operationally connectable to the first switch component through the packet network and operationally connectable to the second switch component through the packet network comprises the steps of:

selecting the phone to comprise a first phone;

selecting the first phone to comprise a shared call appearance with a second phone  
 15 over the first switch component and through the packet network, wherein the second phone comprises the shared call appearance with the first phone over the first switch component and through a network; and

selecting the first phone to comprise a second shared call appearance with a third phone over the second switch component and through the packet network, wherein the third  
 20 phone comprises the second shared call appearance with the first phone over the second switch component and through a network.

16. The method of claim 11, wherein the step of selecting the phone that comprises the connector component that is operationally connectable through the packet network to the any selected one or more of the plurality of switch components comprises the step of:

selecting the phone to comprise a connector component that is operationally  
 5 connectable through the packet network to the any selected one or more of the plurality of switch components through a respective one or more of a plurality of voice over Internet protocol gateways.

17. The method of claim 11, wherein the step of selecting the phone that comprises the connector component that is operationally connectable through the packet network to the  
 10 any selected one or more of the plurality of switch components comprises the step of:

selecting the phone to be registrable with any selected one of a plurality of voice over Internet protocol gateways.

18. The method of claim 17, wherein the plurality of voice over Internet protocol gateways comprises a first voice over Internet protocol gateway and a second voice over  
 15 Internet protocol gateway, wherein the step of selecting the phone to be registrable with the any selected one of the plurality of voice over Internet protocol gateways comprises the steps of:

registering the phone with the first voice over Internet protocol gateway at a first time;

and

20 registering the phone with the second voice over Internet protocol gateway at a second

19. The method of claim 11, wherein the step of selecting the phone that comprises the connector component that is operationally connectable through the packet network to the any selected one or more of the plurality of switch components comprises the step of:

selecting the phone to be registrable with any selected one of a plurality of voice over  
 5 Internet protocol gateways that are owned and/or operated by a plurality of service providers.

20. The method of claim 19, wherein the plurality of service providers comprises a first service provider and a second service provider, wherein the plurality of voice over Internet protocol gateways comprises a first voice over Internet protocol gateway of the first service provider and a second voice over Internet protocol gateway of the second service  
 10 provider, wherein the step of selecting the phone to be registrable with the any selected one of the plurality of voice over Internet protocol gateways that are owned and/or operated by the plurality of service providers comprises the steps of:

registering the phone with the first voice over Internet protocol gateway of the first  
 service provider at a first time; and

15 registering the phone with the second voice over Internet protocol gateway of the second service provider at a second time.

21. An article, comprising:

a computer-readable signal-bearing medium; and

means in the medium for selecting a phone that comprises a connector component that is operationally connectable through a packet network to any selected one or more of a plurality of switch components;

wherein the any selected one or more of the plurality of switch components serve to provide one or more of originating and terminating telecommunication service to the phone.

22. The article of claim 21, wherein the means in the medium for selecting the phone that comprises the connector component that is operationally connectable through the packet network to the any selected one or more of the plurality of switch components comprises:

means in the medium for receiving from a user of the phone an explicit selection of a particular switch component of the plurality of switch components; and

means in the medium for employing the explicit selection with the connector component to operationally connect the phone through the packet network to the particular switch component.



23. The article of claim 21, wherein the means in the medium for selecting the phone that comprises the connector component that is operationally connectable through the packet network to the any selected one or more of the plurality of switch components comprises:

5 means in the medium for selecting the phone to comprise a first phone; and

means in the medium for selecting the first phone to comprise a shared call appearance with a second phone over a switch component of the plurality of switch components and through the packet network, wherein the second phone comprises the shared call appearance with the first phone over the switch component and through a network.

10 24. The article of claim 21, wherein the plurality of switch components comprises a first switch component and a second switch component, wherein the means in the medium for selecting the phone that comprises the connector component that is operationally connectable through the packet network to the any selected one or more of the plurality of switch components comprises:

15 means in the medium for selecting the phone to comprise a connector component that is operationally connectable to the first switch component through the packet network and operationally connectable to the second switch component through the packet network.

25. The article of claim 24, wherein the means in the medium for selecting the phone to comprise the connector component that is operationally connectable to the first switch component through the packet network and operationally connectable to the second switch component through the packet network comprises:

5 means in the medium for selecting the phone to comprise a first phone;

means in the medium for selecting the first phone to comprise a shared call appearance with a second phone over the first switch component and through the packet network, wherein the second phone comprises the shared call appearance with the first phone over the first switch component and through a network; and

10 means in the medium for selecting the first phone to comprise a second shared call appearance with a third phone over the second switch component and through the packet network, wherein the third phone comprises the second shared call appearance with the first phone over the second switch component and through a network.

26. The article of claim 21, wherein the means in the medium for selecting the  
15 phone that comprises the connector component that is operationally connectable through the packet network to the any selected one or more of the plurality of switch components comprises:

means in the medium for selecting the phone to comprise a connector component that is operationally connectable through the packet network to the any selected one or more of the  
20 plurality of switch components through a respective one or more of a plurality of voice over Internet protocol gateways.

27. The article of claim 21, wherein the means in the medium for selecting the phone that comprises the connector component that is operationally connectable through the packet network to the any selected one or more of the plurality of switch components comprises:

5 means in the medium for selecting the phone to be registrable with any selected one of a plurality of voice over Internet protocol gateways.

28. The article of claim 27, wherein the plurality of voice over Internet protocol gateways comprises a first voice over Internet protocol gateway and a second voice over Internet protocol gateway, wherein the means in the medium for selecting the phone to be  
10 registrable with the any selected one of the plurality of voice over Internet protocol gateways comprises:

means in the medium for registering the phone with the first voice over Internet protocol gateway at a first time; and

15 means in the medium for registering the phone with the second voice over Internet protocol gateway at a second time.

29. The article of claim 21, wherein the means in the medium for selecting the phone that comprises the connector component that is operationally connectable through the packet network to the any selected one or more of the plurality of switch components comprises:

20 means in the medium for selecting the phone to be registrable with any selected one of a plurality of voice over Internet protocol gateways that are owned and/or operated by a plurality of service providers.

30. The article of claim 29, wherein the plurality of service providers comprises a first service provider and a second service provider, wherein the plurality of voice over Internet protocol gateways comprises a first voice over Internet protocol gateway of the first service provider and a second voice over Internet protocol gateway of the second service provider, wherein the means in the medium for selecting the phone to be registrable with the any selected one of the plurality of voice over Internet protocol gateways that are owned and/or operated by the plurality of service providers comprises:

means in the medium for registering the phone with the first voice over Internet protocol gateway of the first service provider at a first time; and

means in the medium for registering the phone with the second voice over Internet protocol gateway of the second service provider at a second time.

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